

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-17

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 EB-11 COME-00 AGR-20 DOTE-00 PC-04 RSR-01 /138 W  
----- 045018

P R 252310 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7656

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

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E. O. 11 652: NA

TAGS: EAGR CO

SUBJECT: DARIEN HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION IN PANAMA

REF: STATE 097219 NEAR COLOMBIAN BORDER

1. CONSTRUCTION OF THIRD PROJECT ( CANGLON- YAPE) IN  
PANAMA WOULD APPEAR LIKELY TO INCREASE RISK OF FMD  
TRANSMISSION SINCE YAPE IS ONLY 25 MILES FROM COLOMBIAN  
BORDER. GREATEST RISK WOULD COME FROM PROBABLE EXPANDED  
MOVEMENT

OF COLOMBIANS ACROSS BORDER IN SEARCH OF WORK  
IN CONNECTION WITH HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION.  
HIGHWAY ROUTE WOULD PERMIT MORE RAPID MOVEMENT TO NORTH.

2. ALTHOUGH FIRM DATA ON CLANDESTINE MOVEMENT OF COLOMBIANS  
INTO PANAMA NOT AVAILABLE WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THIS  
MOVEMENT IS SUBSTANTIAL. THIS IS CONFIRMED BY  
REPORT IN " EL TIEMPO" WHICH ESTIMATED 10 THOUSAND  
COLOMBIANS LIVING CLANDESTINELY IN DARIEN PROVINCE OF  
PANAMA. LARGE NUMBERS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY MOVED FARTHER  
NORTH. MOVEMENT INVOLVES MAINLY COLOMBIANS SEEKING  
WORK ON HIGHWAY AND TO LESSER DEGREE SMALL FARMERS  
LOOKING FOR LAND AND SMUGGLERS CARRYING CONTRABAND.

3. MAJOR KNOWN MIGRTION ROUTES FROM COLOMBIA PASS THROUGH  
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PALO DE LETRAS ( FROM SAUTATA TO PAYA AND ALONG RIO CACARICA TO PAYA), THE ALTO LIMON AREA ( FOLLOWING RIVERS INTO PANAMA) AND DIRECTLY WEST FROM ACANDI

( ALSO FOLLOWING RIVERS INTO INTERIOR). THERE HAS ALSO BEEN MOVEMENT UP RIO ASTI VALLEY AND BY SEA TO PUERTO OBALDIA WHERE 80 PERCENT OF POPULATION IS ESTIMATED TO BE COLOMBIAN. OTHER LESSER TRAVELED ROUTES ON PACIFIC SIDE NAMED FOR COLOMBIAN AND PANAMAIA RIVERS USED

E JURADO- Balsa AND JAMPAVADO- JAQUE. THERE IS ALSO BELIEVED TO BE MOVEMENT BY SEA UP THE PACIFIC COAST TO LA PALMA AND THEN UP THE TUIRA AND Balsa RIVERS INTO CENTRAL DARIEN.

4. AS INDICATED ABOVE LAND MOVEMENT GENERALLY FOLLOWS INDICATED RIVERS ALTHOUGH IMPORTANT SAUTATA- PAYA AND ALTO LIMON ROUTES INVOLVE CONSIDERABLE OVERLAND TRAVEL AS DOES ROUTE THROUGH RIO ASTI VALLEY.

5. COLOMBIAN VETERINARY AUTHORITIES INDICATE THAT THEY ARE NOT AWARE OF SIGNIFICANT CATTLE MOVEMENT ACROSS BORDER ALTHOUGH THERE IS REPORTED TO BE SOME CLANDESTINE MOVEMENT OF SWINE, BEEF AND POSSIBLY CATTLE TO PUERTO OBALDIA. HOWEVER, COLOMBIANS MOVING ACROSS BORDER INTO PANAMA HAVE BEEN INTERCEPTED CARRYING FOOD- STUFFS INCLUDING LIVESTOCK PRODUCTS SUCH AS CHEESE.

6. COLOMBIAN BORDER CONTROLS ON MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE ARE BELIEVED INADEQUATE. THIS MOVEMENT IS CONTROLLED MAINLY BY CUSTOMS OFFICIALS LOCATED IN PORTS ION D FAR FROM ILLEGAL MIGRATION ROUTES. CONDITIONS OF TERRAIN TEND TO DISCOURAGE MOVEMENT OF CATTLE OVER LAND EXCEPT IN RIO ASTI VALLEY WHERE CONTRABAND MOVEMENT HAS BEEN ALLEGED. ICA HAS ONE VETERINARIAN AND SIX INSPECTORS OPERATING IN NORTH- WEST CHOCO AREA WITH PRIMARY MISSION TO PREVENT INTRODUCTION OF CATTLE FROM FMD INFECTED AREAS IN COLOMBIA TO THIS AREA WHICH HAS BEEN FREE OF FMD FOR FIVE YEARS. THEY ARE NOT CONCERNED WITH PREVENTION OF ILLEGAL CATTLE MOVEMENT INTO PANAMA, RELYING INSTEAD ON PANAMANIAN AUTHORITIES TO CARRY OUT THIS CONTROL.

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* n/a

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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